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8. — *Philosophical Discussions.* By CHAUNCEY WRIGHT. New York : Henry Holt & Co. 1877. 8vo. pp. 434.

THIS book is the work of an author who should and who will be more widely known. Outside of his class-fellows at college and the select circle of his Boston friends, he is little heard of, but the Discussions, fugitive as they are, which he has contributed to the most advanced philosophy of the age, are so full of profound thought and acute ratiocination, that he must stand, in future, among the yet few great thinkers which our young country has produced. It is not that we subscribe to all, or even many, of his conclusions that we thus praise him, but that we admire the extent of his researches, his mastery of the most difficult subjects, and his penetrating intellect. He has grappled with the most arduous disquisitions, both philosophical and scientific, of the present adventurous time, and dared to criticise them in such a manner as proves that, if he had lived longer, and concentrated his efforts on some great work, he might have given us a system of philosophy which, though perhaps alarmingly heterodox, would have ranked him with Jonathan Edwards and Laurens Hickok among ourselves, or with Mill and Spencer of England. In the days of Edwards he probably would have exercised his dialectic ingenuity in a defence of Calvinism, — for he is eminently a critic of contemporaneous thought, — and we regret that we have not from his pen a review of Hickok's "Rational Psychology," — a work which he was fitted to handle, either in the way of confutation or confirmation, with greater ability than any of those who have attempted to pass judgment upon it. It has always struck us as a strange thing that errors committed in other treatises of the Schenectady Professor, or some other circumstances to us unknown, have shut out from general notice this his most elaborate and meritorious production ; an *a priori* or synthetic science of mind which distances anything of the kind that has yet appeared in the United States.

Mr. Wright's discussions were, with three exceptions, contributed to two periodicals. The chief of them first appeared in this Review, and are entitled, "A Physical Theory of the Universe," "The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer," "Limits of Natural Selection," "The Genesis of Species," "Evolution by Natural Selection," "Evolution of Self-Consciousness," and the "Conflict of Studies." It will be apparent from these very titles that all the essays, save the last, are closely connected with the modern doctrine of evolution, and even the last has no remote reference to the same theory. The author enjoyed an advantage over

most philosophers in being as much at home in science as in metaphysics ; and therefore his conclusions, whether we agree with them or not, do not rest on comparative ignorance. Whosoever would competently arbitrate in present controversies between science and theology must be an expert in both, and until our clergy, or at least the ablest of them, become thorough students of science as well as of divinity they are sure to have the worst in the encounter.

Mr. Wright is an evolutionist of the extremest kind. In the minds of most believers in evolution, the term means not only continuous succession, but continuous progress or advancement from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the less perfect to the more perfect. This belief is implied in the very words "survival of the *fittest*." But Mr. Wright, while adhering strenuously to the doctrine of development, appears to have abandoned the concomitant idea of progressive improvement, and would call the Darwinian theory the *Derivative* and not the *Development* hypothesis. He regards the phenomena of the universe as resulting from "a corrupt mixture of law and apparent accident," and in opposition to "the theory of evolution," as "a generalization from the phenomena of growth," he would propose another and a better generalization, which he calls "the principle of counter-movements." As long as evolution or development included progress from the less to the more perfect, a man might be a Darwinian without being an atheist, — he could see in nature an originating power and a superintending providence. This we understand to be the position of Tyndal, Huxley, and the rest. A first cause they come to at last. But according to Mr. Wright's new principle this ultimate refuge of the theist is destroyed. Evolution is simple derivation, and may as easily be retrogressive as progressive. This is, indeed, a dreary landing-place ; but our author's quest of truth as he sees it appears to lead so far, and he is not afraid to follow it.

Few expressions have been more fanatically abused than the phrases, "An evil heart of unbelief," and "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." No doubt there have been many in ancient times who ignored a Supreme Ruler because their deeds would not endure inspection, and their desires and passions were too gross to be indulged without compunction while God was in their thoughts ; and in these latter days there may be as many who wish Christianity to be false and theism an illusion, because the former interferes with their wickedness by teaching retribution, and even the latter might imply responsibility and a hereafter. But to class all scepticism as proceeding from a wicked heart, and all doubt of a God as a certain mark of sinful folly, is pure fanaticism. There are at this day many unbelievers whose characters

are as lofty and whose lives are as pure and useful as the lives and characters of most orthodox believers ; and among this number we must reckon Chauncey Wright. Prefixed to the Discussions is a very graceful and affectionate biographical sketch by his friend Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, from which it appears that he was a retiring, modest man, amiable, charitable, just. The pursuit of truth was the prevailing motive of his life. He was no bigot, intolerant of opposition and deaf to antagonistic argument ; but, as he himself said of John Stuart Mill, "He sincerely welcomed intelligent and earnest opposition with a deference due to truth itself, and to a just regard of the diversities in men's minds from differences of education and natural dispositions. These diversities even appeared to him essential to the completeness of the examination which the evidences of truth demand. Opinions positively erroneous, if intelligent and honest, are not without their value, since the progress of truth is a succession of mistakes and corrections. Truth itself, unassailed by erroneous opinion, would soon degenerate into narrowness and error. The errors incident to individuality of mind and character are means, in the attrition of discussion, of keeping the truth bright and untarnished, and even of bringing its purity to light." Here is at once a proof of his amiability and his love of the true. The true was to be sought through good report and through evil report, and with the belief that in the free collision of minds light would be struck out.

Mr. Wright's style and mode of thinking make his disquisitions hard reading. They are too compact of thought, and are expressed in language which was familiar to the author, but which to the common reader appears extremely technical. A little more expansion and definition would have opened up their treasures without demanding a search so constant and an attention so sustained.

Besides the longer articles already alluded to, there are nearly the same number of shorter ones that appeared in the New York "Nation." These articles are on kindred subjects, and mainly on the controversy between Mill and Hamilton, as the latter was vindicated by two of his most distinguished pupils, the late Dean Mansel, and Dr. McCosh, President of Princeton College.

The volume contains, besides, a long and able article "On the Uses and Origin of the Arrangements of Leaves in Plants," communicated to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. It is a fair specimen of Mr. Wright's method of treating a scientific subject, and he has not failed to combine with his botanical observations their bearing on his favorite theory of development by fitness.

The article on education, entitled "The Conflict of Studies," was called forth by an essay of Professor Todhunter of Cambridge, England.

It chiefly discusses the place of mathematics in a college curriculum, and as a contribution to the Science of Instruction it will reward perusal. If we ever have a science of education it must be founded on an accurate psychology, for how can we train a mind in all its capacities if we do not previously know, with the precision of a true mental philosophy, what these capacities are, and what are their relations to one another? The discussion of this topic by a writer competent to the task, even though it should extend to two successive articles, might find a proper place in this Review, which aims at guiding the public mind in the freshest and most important questions of the day. With a more extended experience in teaching, another Chauncey Wright would be able to handle the subject in such a manner as to render material aid to that reform of our present methods after which our best colleges are earnestly endeavoring.

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9. — *Majolica and Fayence: Italian, Sicilian, Majorcan, Hispano-Moresque, and Persian*. By ARTHUR BECKWITH. With Illustrations. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1877. pp. 185.

WITHIN a limited space Mr. Beckwith has not only produced a good text-book, but has succeeded in incorporating in the volume a great deal of technical and artistic information relative to *Majolica* and *Fayence*, both ancient and modern. It is pleasant to notice that, with a just appreciation of the marvels of art stored up in our midst, Mr. Beckwith, in his text and illustrations, refers generally to such specimens of *Majolica* as may be seen in the Castellani collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is indeed an unmistakable token of the rapid art-progress made in the United States, when such a really good volume as Mr. Beckwith's book is produced, and when comparisons between the text and the actual art-objects can be made in New York to-day, without a Transatlantic journey. Commencing with the use of *Majolica*, Mr. Beckwith clearly defines what is not so well known in regard to it, to wit, that this superb pottery, with its wonderful designs and glowing colors, served rather as presents, heirlooms to be preserved, than as utensils in common use. The development of art in Italy, tracing its phases from the Egypto-Assyrian period until the coming of the Renaissance, forms an excellent introduction to the book. The history of each of the numerous schools of ceramic work in Italy, the origin of the *votegas*, are carefully yet succinctly told. No less important parts of the book are those portions devoted to modern work. The names of the leading European makers in Europe, China, and Japan, their places of production, and the quality and characteristics of their work are